

Fiona Cattermole

From: Fiona Cattermole [fionacattermole@finexex.com]
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To: fionacattermole@finexex.com
Subject: Improving Parenting Skills & Relationships

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Parent Skills and

Relationships

Maintaining The T.I.E.S. That Bind

Improve your parenting skills AND your relationship

December 2007

Dear Fiona,

However you celebrate this exciting time of year, you're probably going to be making plans to spend some special time with friends and family - even traveling to do so or hosting those who travel to see you. Either way, even though such events are happily planned and awaited, they are not always the blissfully happy experience we expect and would like them to be!

Stress is a close "friend" of such highly-anticipated times and there are a few things worth bearing in mind as you prepare for them, that will reduce the stress on the whole family.

In this month's newsletter I will give you a few time-tested, simple hints - please adapt them to fit the needs of your particular situation.

If you have any comments or questions, please feel free to send them to me as I consider [readership feedback](#) a vital component in both improving my writing skills and delivering what my readership wants and deserves.

Wishing you a safe and wonderfully happy holiday season!

Fiona

You can help me serve the needs of all parents by completing the following questionnaire.

For class topics, which of the following are of most interest to you?

- #1 Maintaining the T.I.E.S. That Bind (parental relationships)
- #2 How to Set and Hold Limits with Young Children
- #3 The Parenting Shift - from parenting children to parenting teens
- #4 How to parent when you're no longer together
- #5 The "Blending" Family: How to minimize stress and distress
- #6 How to Improve Your Child's School Performance
- #7 Sibling Rivalry Reigns!
- #8 Making Resistance Your Ally - when children resist change

What is your preference for class days and times?

- A. Monday
- B. Tuesday
- C. Wednesday
- D. Thursday
- E. Friday

- a. During school hours
- b. After school/afternoon
- c. Evenings
- d. Need on-site daycare?

Please indicate your preference by [clicking here](#) and completing the email with #, capital alpha and small alpha choices from above. For example, your preference is for The Parent Shift (#3), on Mondays (A) after school (b) and you need daycare. That would be 3,A,b,d.

Thank you!

The Challenges and Opportunities of Visiting Family during the Holidays

The Challenges

If you accept the notion that increased stress is fairly normal, and should be expected, then things will go more smoothly for you

Planning. Once the dates are confirmed and the tickets reserved, take a few deep breaths and pat yourself on the back - the worst is over. Thinking about what to take is a snap! Unless you're a Hollywood celeb, think "Less is better" and pack only the basics for survival. I know that sounds strange, but wherever you're going will have stores that sell what you absolutely can't do without but forgot to bring. If you don't think that way, you'll need a herd of camels to transport your goods and chattel from one place to another. I know, as a mother of 3 daughters, whereof I speak.

For the host family - decide what you can and cannot provide for your visitors. This isn't the time to do a home makeover, or take gourmet cooking lessons in order to impress - you don't need the added stress.

Plan meals you can prepare ahead, engage the help of your guests while they're staying with you, and plan a few meals out.

Travel & Arrival. Don't break out in hives at the thought. Whether traveling by car, train, bus or plane, you know what's needed to keep your children of any age occupied and happy - sugary junk food, games/music and videos, along with any other favorite time-fillers. You also know what you need to keep your sanity - spare time, wet wipes, clean clothes, earplugs, cash, and a traveling companion (preferably the other parent) who you can vent to. Again, keep the baggage you bring to an absolute minimum. If the children get bored with the little they brought, as a great time-filler there's nothing better than a sibling or parent to torture.

You may be tired (wretched, exhausted, done-in, etc) upon arrival at your destination - and if you took an "economical" flight or train ride, you can rest assured that your arrival will be between the hours of 11pm and 3am. But, you've arrived, and you're still an intact traveling unit. Well done.

As the host family however, you have been eagerly awaiting your guests' arrival and may be refreshed and energetic. Be brief with your greetings and let them get to bed as soon as possible so that the good cheer can continue in the morning when everyone has regained their equilibrium.

Entertainment and Gifts. Where entertainment is concerned, leave plenty of time to show your guests the lights on strolls around your neighborhood. Go to a movie or decide on some other simple pleasure when the moment strikes. Elaborate planning is absolutely not required since your guests can be responsible for much of their own entertainment planning.

For most families, being together is a priceless gift, so keep other kinds of gifts simple and small (especially if they are to be packed for a return journey).

The Opportunities

Strengthen family ties. Children especially can benefit from getting to know distant relatives. Let them hear stories from all the characters - young and old - they're lucky enough to meet. Have them journal the stories, take photos and videos of people and activities, and interview older generations. There are plenty of historical, social and cultural lessons to be learned even though the children are out of school.

Plan ways to keep in touch during the coming months or years before the next visit. Technology makes it so easy for us to take and send photos and videos. Emails, cheap long-distance phone calls, and instant-messaging provide a much quicker and cheaper way to communicate than before.

Forgive and forget. Find a way to make the holidays a "holiday" away from dredging up old grievances unless you really have a foolproof plan to bring them up, resolve them, and move on. What's the point if you can't get through to somebody anyway? You may even make matters worse.

Happy Holidays!

About Fiona

*Fiona Cattermole, MSW, CPBA, is a Relationship and Parenting Coach. Her mission is to help parents strengthen their relationship with each other **at the same time as** raising happy and well-adjusted kids.*

Contact her at 303.807.1044, fionacattermole@finexex.com if you would like engage her for a presentation, attend a seminar, or talk to her about parent relationship or children's behavioral coaching.

Contact Information

Fiona Cattermole, MSW, CPBA
303.807.1044

fionacattermole@finexex.com

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